

St JP II

Be not afraid...



ST. JOHN PAUL II
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

**2018, 2008 and 1997 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON
SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE
Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston**

**2024-2025
ROOM PARENT HANDBOOK**

ST. JOHN PAUL II ROOM PARENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024

WELCOME ROOM PARENTS

Thank you for volunteering to serve as a Room Parent for your child's class this year! This is a wonderful way to be involved at St. John Paul II Catholic School and to meet other StJPII families. This handbook has been prepared to outline the responsibilities and expectations of Room Parents and to answer questions that may arise during the year.

GENERAL

The Room Parents are selected from those who have signed up to volunteer. The goals of the selection process are:

- To select parents who have not had the opportunity to serve as a Room Parent in the past.
- To select new parents to the St. John Paul II Catholic School community.

The selection process is also based on the following:

- We try to select volunteers who have not served as a Room Parent for a particular child in consecutive years, when possible.
- We only select volunteers who are St. John Paul II volunteer-approved or are nearing the end of the approval process.

The main responsibilities of the Room Parents are as follows:

1. Make introductory phone calls and/or send emails to each family in your classroom.
2. Coordinate field trip chaperones as requested by teachers.
3. Coordinate volunteers for special events, such as class projects and Staff Appreciation Luncheons.
4. Coordinate the class Christmas party under the guidance of teachers and Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO).
5. Communicate with your class through email, as needed by your child's teachers or other StJPII Staff.
6. Always copy the Room Parent Coordinators at roomparentcoordinators@jp2.org for **ALL** email communications with the teachers and/or staff.

7. Any communications to the classroom must first be approved by administration. Room Parents may send a proposed draft to the RPCs to forward for approval, or they may send it directly to administration with the RPCs on copy.

Classrooms in Pre-K – 4th grades have a Room Parent (RP) and an Assistant Room Parent (ARP). The Room Parent is responsible for coordinating all volunteers and field trip chaperones for all events. This helps ensure that all volunteers are given an equal opportunity to participate in these events. The Assistant Room Parent is responsible for working with the teacher to plan and execute the Christmas party. The RP and ARP should divide and/or share any remaining duties, such as sending class email updates and forwarding school emails, based on individual circumstances and by mutual agreement.

Classrooms in 5th - 8th grades usually have one assigned Room Parent, though two is acceptable and encouraged where there are multiple volunteers who wish to share responsibilities. There are fewer field trips for the Room Parents to coordinate in middle school. In cases where there is an Assistant Room Parent in middle school, the Assistant and head Room Parent can discuss and determine the division of duties at their discretion.

VOLUNTEER APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

Every year the volunteer status of our StJPII volunteers must be reviewed by the school administration, in order to ensure that each person's CMG Safe Haven requirements and paperwork are up-to-date. In addition, each volunteer must have their Driver's License scanned by the front office before they volunteer for the first time that year. Before volunteering on campus with the students, all volunteers MUST be VOLUNTEER-APPROVED with a StJPII picture ID badge, as described on the school website under the Parent Corner – Volunteer Approval / CMG Safe Haven tab.

This means all volunteers must have completed a CMG Safe Haven online training course (and the refresher course when applicable), provide volunteer forms from the StJPII website (a completed background check and signed Code of Conduct) and have a StJPII volunteer picture ID badge in order to volunteer at the school. The volunteer status of classroom volunteers is confirmed through the Room Parent Coordinators, through the method described below under "Field Trips and Volunteer Selection Process."

GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS

Room Parents and Assistant Room Parents are expected to adhere to all school policies as outlined in the Student Handbook and the Room Parent Handbook. The following guidelines are of particular importance:

1. The use of volunteers in the classroom or for class activities is determined solely at the discretion of the teacher. Volunteers must work under the direct supervision of a StJPll staff member at all times. The faculty must always handle disciplinary matters. There is generally a limit of 2-4 parent volunteers in a classroom depending on the activity or need, which is determined by each classroom teacher.
2. Siblings or other children who are not students at StJPll **are not** permitted to accompany parents to their volunteer activities at the school or on field trips away from campus. This rule extends to meetings during school hours and lunchroom duties even though these activities are not in the classrooms.
3. Volunteers should dress appropriately when working on campus. Overly casual attire, exercise clothing, sports attire, or shorts/skirts of an inappropriate length should not be worn. Volunteers may wear jeans, as long as they conform to the dress code guidelines for the students. All volunteers must sign in and out while volunteering and must wear the StJPll picture ID badge and/or a volunteer sticker on their clothing while at school events.
4. If, in the course of working as a school volunteer, a parent learns of confidential information regarding a student, family or staff member, the volunteer is expected to respect the confidential nature of this information. Failure to respect the privacy of others in the StJPll community may jeopardize volunteer status.
5. One of the primary goals of the PTO is to increase awareness of programs and volunteer opportunities among the StJPll parent community. To achieve this, Room Parents should provide all parents who are willing to volunteer a reasonable opportunity to do so and should always strive to demonstrate a spirit of fairness and inclusiveness.
6. PICTURES AND/OR VIDEOS TAKEN AT SCHOOL, ON FIELD TRIPS AND/OR AT ANY StJPll FUNCTION **MAY NOT** BE POSTED ON ANY PUBLIC OR SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES BY PARENTS IF STUDENTS OTHER THAN THEIR OWN CHILDREN ARE INCLUDED.
7. ROOM PARENTS MAY USE THE PERSONAL INFORMATION OF StJPll FAMILIES, SUCH AS EMAIL ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS, FOR **SCHOOL-RELATED COMMUNICATIONS ONLY**.

INTRODUCTORY CLASSROOM PHONE CALL AND/OR EMAIL

Room Parents should send an introductory email, or when needed place introductory phone calls, to each family in their assigned classroom. The purpose of each phone call or email is to:

- Introduce yourself as the Room Parent(s) for the year and introduce the Assistant Room Parent.
- Initiate communication to the parents in your assigned classroom about volunteer possibilities throughout the school year.
- Inform parents about the Volunteer Approval Process at StJPII, which requires annual verification and is described on the school website under the Parent Corner – Volunteer Approval / CMG Safe Haven tab. Encourage all interested volunteers to use the checklist provided on the website. Any missed step disqualifies them.
- Make yourself available for questions, especially for newer families.
- Compile your “Volunteer List” based on responses from the class. **The volunteer list should only include those parents who have stated they are VOLUNTEER-APPROVED – meaning they have completed the CMG Safe Haven training, passed a background check, signed a Code of Conduct and have a StJPII picture ID badge in the school office.** Prior to each event or activity, please submit to the Room Parent Coordinators the list of proposed volunteers. The Room Parent Coordinators will then submit these names through the proper channels for confirmation that they are VOLUNTEER-APPROVED. Since a parent’s status may change during the school year, please compile a separate Volunteer List for each semester.

FIELD TRIPS AND VOLUNTEER SELECTION PROCESS

Teachers and administration plan field trips to enhance the school curriculum. Most grade levels attend one or two field trips during the school year, and most of these (with the exception of certain middle school trips) require parent chaperones.

1. Room Parents should communicate with the teachers concerning the number of parent chaperones desired, along with any additional needs they may have, such as ice chests or water coolers, ice bags, etc.
2. Teachers generally request field trip chaperones a few weeks in advance of the trip date. Room Parents should recruit chaperones **as soon as possible** to allow parents time to make any necessary arrangements. Under no circumstances are siblings allowed to attend field trips.

3. Being a field trip chaperone is one of the most popular volunteer jobs among parents. Therefore, it is particularly important that the Room Parent strives to provide an opportunity for as many interested parents as possible to participate. The process for ensuring fairness to all interested volunteers will be discussed in more detail at the Room Parent Meeting, or you may contact the Room Parent Coordinators.

In general, you must follow these guidelines for choosing Field Trip chaperones:

- a. When a field trip has been scheduled, either the teacher or the Room Parent Coordinator (“RPC”) will contact you a few weeks in advance. At this time, please ask the RPC to provide you with the deadline for submitting chaperone names for verification.
- b. Contact your teacher to determine the number of chaperones and alternates needed as well as any other needs like coolers, picnic blankets, etc . Then email your entire class to provide trip information and ask any parent interested in volunteering to respond to you via email **providing their full name and Family ID#** by a predetermined deadline. (You should select a deadline at least 1 day prior to the RPC submission deadline).
- c. Send all names with Family ID#s to RPC to verify volunteer-approval status on or before the RPC submission deadline.
- d. Once RPC emails you verification of the parents’ volunteer-approval status, perform a random drawing to select the required number of volunteers for your class, and then draw additional names to be alternates (usually at least 2).

Remove the names of parents who have already attended a field trip for your class, or have had their spouse attend a field trip for your class, unless you do not otherwise have enough volunteers.

If any volunteer is not volunteer-approved, advise the volunteer in a private, respectful and confidential manner to contact the office regarding their volunteering status.

- e. Email the teachers, **with RPC on copy and the entire class on blind copy**, the names of the selected chaperones and alternates.
- f. Make sure to remind your chaperones and alternates of their duties a few days before the trip. Confirm that alternates will be “on call” but otherwise should not expect to attend.
- g. Promptly share any information about the field trip that you receive from RPC or the teachers with your chaperones and alternates, as needed.

4. Parents serving as chaperones on field trips should remember that ensuring the safety of students is the **most important** role they have. Having social conversations should not interfere with that responsibility. In addition, the school policy is that pictures taken during field trips by the chaperones may not be posted on social media.
5. The front office staff will have Field Trip Chaperone Name Tags (usually sticker tags) ready at the front office on the day of the field trip. All chaperones will need to sign in and put on their designated tags. No StJPII ID badge should be removed from the school campus.
6. Please continue to communicate with chaperones about any changes or reminders. Good, thorough communication is very important for a successful field trip.
7. Chaperones need to park on Brimhurst or Manderly (not Parkway Plaza). Cars that are parked on Parkway Plaza block carpool lines and make it unsafe for the buses to load and unload our children safely.

STAFF APPRECIATION LUNCHEONS

The PTO sponsors Staff Appreciation Luncheons each year. In 2024-2025, they are scheduled for November 2024 and May 2025 (the exact dates will be posted on the school calendar as soon as they are determined). These are usually a catered affair in St. Jude Hall and last for about an hour.

Room Parents will be asked to solicit volunteers to serve as a lunchroom or classroom monitor (depending on the teacher's schedule) for their class so that the teacher may enjoy lunch with fellow faculty members. **Only those parents who are VOLUNTEER-APPROVED will be allowed to volunteer in the classrooms or on campus.** Room Parent Coordinators will contact each Room Parent with more information. Volunteer times are not necessarily simultaneous with the children's regular lunch times. Volunteers will check in with the Room Parent Coordinators near the front office at their assigned times.

CLASS PARTIES

The Christmas class parties are held on the last school day before the Christmas holidays. This year it will be on Friday, December 20, 2024. Room Parent Coordinators will notify you of the party time. Of course, these details are subject to change at the discretion of the school administration.

- A Room Parent or Assistant Room Parent may attend the class party unless he/she has another parent volunteer to serve in his/her place for the event.

PLEASE NOTE: Room Parents and Assistant Room Parents can only participate in either one field trip OR the Christmas party, but not both (unless there are extenuating circumstances). Please give ALL parents the opportunity to volunteer.

Room Parents are encouraged to invite volunteer-approved parents who have not yet had the opportunity to volunteer in the classroom to assist with the party. The number of volunteers is 2-4, determined by the teacher.

Refreshments: The PTO purchases, for all classes, refreshments and paper goods. Room Parents should **not** bring additional food or drink for their classroom. The Room Parent Coordinators will contact each Room Parent regarding the details of the class party. Each Room Parent is responsible for arriving at school at the designated time to gather the refreshments for his/her class.

Activities: Room Parents should contact the teacher (via note/email) a few weeks before the party to discuss plans for party activities. Some teachers enjoy planning their own activities, while others prefer that the Room Parent handle all aspects of the parties. Of course, the activities should be entertaining and interesting to the children; however, activities must be restricted to reasonably quiet projects appropriate for the classroom setting. Some ideas are:

- Christmas crafts - a million possibilities here; be sure to keep it simple and appropriate for the age level
- Christmas stories - read to younger children; dramatizations by older children
- Puzzles and games using Christmas themes - examples include Pin-the-Halo-on-the-Angel, Pin-the-Stocking-on-the-Chimney, Christmas carol charades, board games, Christmas Bingo, Christmas Pictionary, etc.

Room Parents for each class within a grade level should communicate their plans with each other. While activities within a grade level do not have to be identical, they should be equitable. Please note costs associated with the Christmas party will NOT be reimbursed by the school.

TEACHER/STAFF GIFTS

In general, the school does not allow parent-led collections for a tangible gift for any occasion – birthdays, Baby Shower, Christmas gifts, or end-of-year gifts. **In short, Room Parents may not organize a class gift. Coordinated gifts of any kind are not permitted, which include collecting gift cards or any other individual gifts to present to the teachers and/or staff as coming from the entire class.** Gifts from families and students are completely voluntary, and it is the staff's

desire that no one should ever feel pressured to participate in a group collection of money or tangible gifts. If a Room Parent would like to share ideas about the teacher's favorite things with the class, that is permitted, so that families can create or purchase their own individual, personal gifts. There is a black binder in the Front Office that contains a sheet of personal information each teacher and staff member has filled out. It includes birthdays, favorite foods, and favorite hobbies, among other things. Room Parents are welcome to visit the office during a non-busy time. Please ask to view the binder and make notes or take a picture of the desired pages.

Ideas of Permitted Class Gifts (non-tangible): Room Parents should inform the class's parents of the teacher's and assistant teacher's birthdays. Some grade levels at StJPII have a special tradition whereby Room Parents inform the class that they are welcome to bring a fresh flower and/or homemade card to school on the teacher's birthday. This allows the students to show their appreciation and recognition of their teachers in a personal way and is generally done in the younger grades (pre-K through 4th grade). Another idea for any grade level is to allow parents to participate in a spiritual bouquet, which involves a voluntary commitment by the parent and/or child to say prayers (of any kind) for the teacher on his/her birthday. These prayers can be written down and also delivered to the teacher through their child(ren) on the teacher's birthday.

ALL OTHER CLASS-ORGANIZED TANGIBLE GIFTS REQUIRE THE SPECIFIC PRE-APPROVAL OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL. If you wish to help organize a teacher's gift for a special reason, before taking any affirmative steps, please discuss it with the Room Parent Coordinators, who will then forward the request through the proper channels. Administration recognizes that in some special cases, exceptions are warranted.

PTO Teacher gifts: At Christmas and at the end of the school year, the PTO will organize the gifts for all teachers, teachers' assistants, and support staff. The Room Parent, as mentioned above, MAY NOT collect any money from parents or organize a class gift for the teachers or staff. **THE PTO'S CLASSROOM CHRISTMAS GIFT AND END-OF-THE-SCHOOL-YEAR GIFT ARE VOLUNTARY.** The PTO will initiate collecting these funds and will use the entire fund to buy equal gift cards (or provide a cash gift) for all faculty and staff. The suggested gift is usually \$10.00/per child/per teacher. But please bear in mind that teachers' assistants and support staff also deserve a token of gratitude and additional dollars on their behalf would be appreciated. Again, it must be **absolutely stressed** that this is **VOLUNTARY** and it does not preclude a personal gift by the child, especially one of handmade significance.

UNOFFICIAL CLASS ACTIVITIES AND EMAILS TO THE CLASS

Any communications to the classroom must first be approved by administration. Room Parents may send a proposed draft to the RPCs to forward for approval, or they may send it directly to administration with the RPCs on copy.

Some Room Parents enjoy planning activities outside of school with their child's classmates and families, and such activities are a terrific way to build community within the school.

Please understand that due to potential liability exposure to the school, notices or invitations for such activities **are not** to be distributed through the school. Even though the notice may state that the event is not a school-sponsored event, the school could possibly be held liable in the event of an accident or injury at such an activity.

Room Parents are asked to respect the fact that teachers are professionals who are employed to work at the school during school hours. Generally speaking, teachers should not be requested to help organize or participate in informal activities planned by parents.

QUESTIONS

Any questions or concerns regarding the responsibilities of Room Parents should be directed to the following individuals:

Liza Faerber

roomparentcoordinators@jp2.org

Joyce Holicek

roomparentcoordinators@jp2.org